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38 vol. 6<sup>th</sup> books to be seen

On Hepatitis

by

Jonathan B. Willauer

of Pennsylvania

Permitted to withdraw during  
examination March 14<sup>th</sup> 1825

Dr. Roberts

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Dr. Roberts

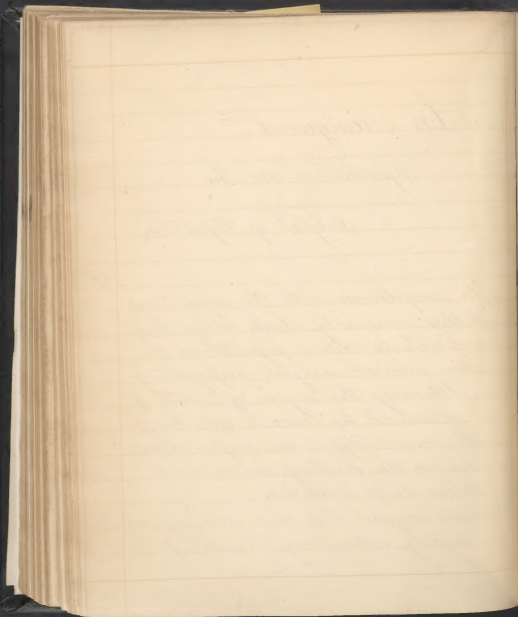
Dr. Roberts

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An inaugural  
dissertation on the  
subject of Hepatitis.

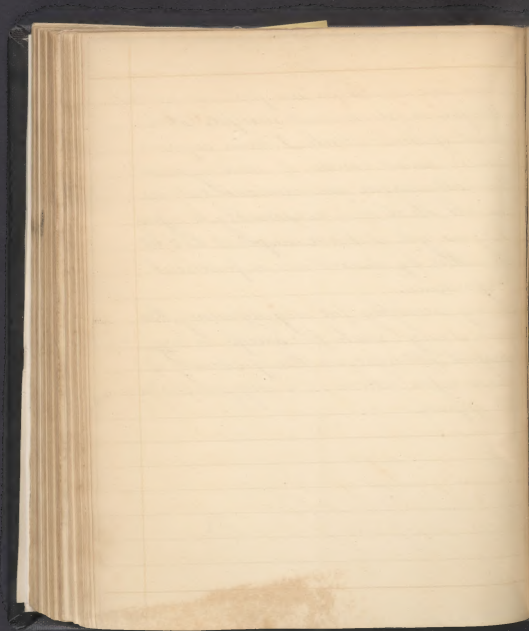
In compliance with the regulations  
of this university, which oblige this  
candidate to write a dissertation on  
some medical subject, preparatory  
to obtaining the degree of Doctor of  
medicine; I beg leave to offer, though  
with much diffidence, a few observa-  
tions, on the history, nature, and  
treatment, of hepatitis.

On an occasion like this, nothing new  
or highly interesting, can be expected



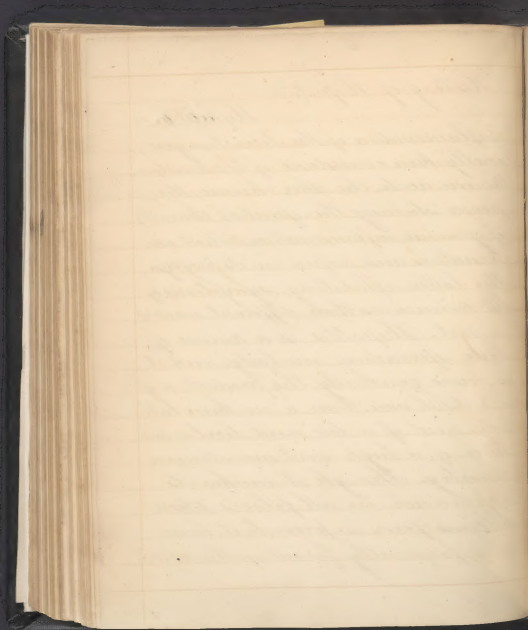
from one who is in his first rudiments  
Therefore a plain and simple state-  
ment of that which I have acquired  
in a usual course of reading and  
an attendance on medical lectures,  
is all that can reasonably be expec-  
-ted; as yet, I have acquired but lit-  
-tle either by observation or practical  
experience.

I very sensibly feel my deficiency, there-  
fore, I rely much for success in my  
present attempt, on the generosity of  
those before whom it is my good fortune  
to appear.



## History of Hepatitis

Hepatitis, or inflammation of the liver has generally been considered of two kinds, the one acute, the other chronic; the former showing the essential character of genuine inflammation, violent in its nature and rapid in its progress. The latter exhibiting symptoms of less violence as their different names import. Hepatitis is a disease of wide spreading malady, and it is more generally the production of a vertical sun, than a northern latitude, and of a low and level rather than of a high and mountainous country. Though it makes its appearance in all places, where bilious fever is prevalent; hence it is frequently found in the mias





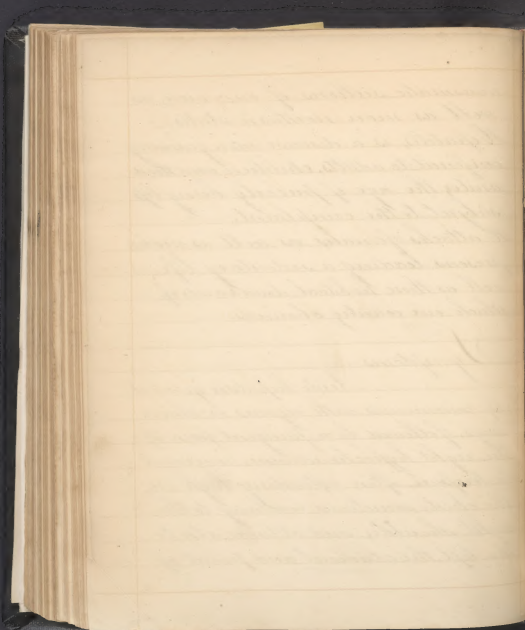
miasmatic sections of our own, as well as more northerne states.

Hepatitis, is a disease more generally confined to adults, children and those under the age of puberty being less subject to the complaint.

It attacks females as well as males; persons leading a sedentary life, as well as those habitual drunkards ~~of~~ in which our country abounds.

## Symptoms

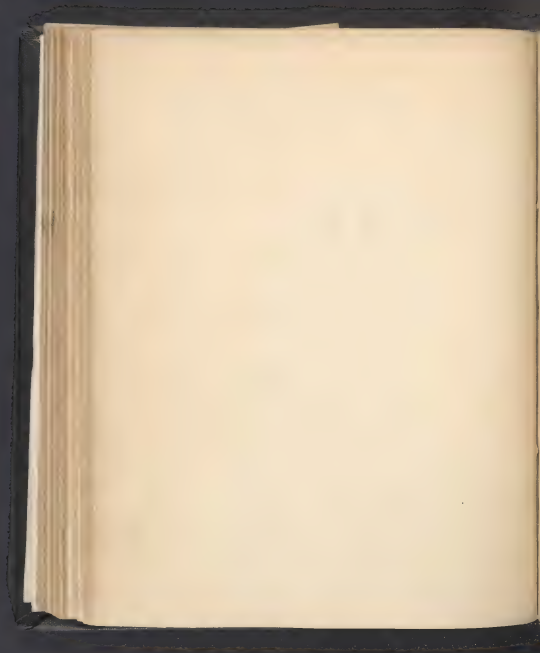
Acute hepatitis generally commences with rigours or shiverings, followed by a pungent pain of the right hypochondrium, increased by pressure, often extending high in the chest, sometimes reaching to the right shoulder, and at times, also to the left, the clavical and point of



the shoulder suffers much; incapacity of lying upon the left side, followed by chills, fever, and considerable increase of the pain, and generally if not always attended by some degree of cough, which is more frequently dry than moist.

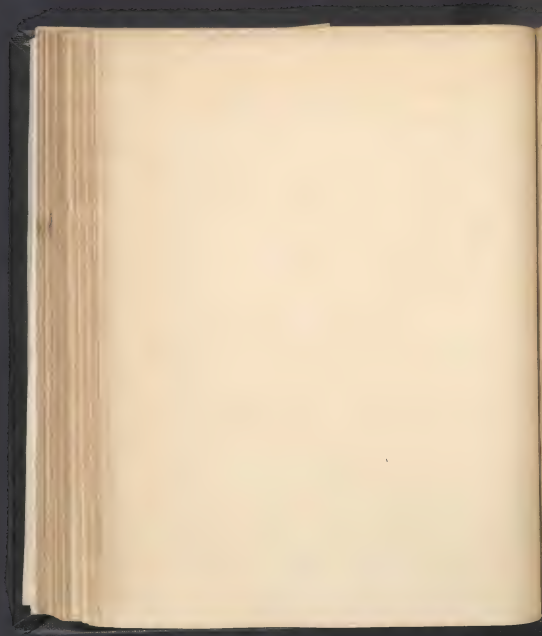
Effusion in the pleura, nausea, some times with a vomiting of bilious matter, the bowels are frequently irregular, though often constipated than otherwise; occasionally however the reverse is true amounting almost to symptoms of dysentery.

There is at times an inability, or difficulty of lying, except on the affected side, yet cases sometimes occur when the patient is unable to lie on either side, and is obliged to be confined on his back; in these cases a weight is felt, under an attempt to lie on the left side, pressure on the right hypochondriac region excites pain, and



by a careful examination, an enlargement and hardness of the liver becomes perceptible. In some instances the complaint is marked by a discrepancy, at other times by a superabundant secretion of bile: the tongue is covered with a white, and sometimes by a yellowish fur, as it occasionally is when the abdominal viscera are disordered.

The pulse is strong, hard, and frequent, exceeding about one hundred, in a minute, and at times, intermitting; it is attended with a sallowness of the skin, arising from an obstruction of the biliary duct; and the urine is generally high coloured. In the chronic species of this disease most of the foregoing symptoms make their appearance, though, in a less violent degree, they do not all appear in the person at a time, but appear in different indi-



individuals, with much variety, both in extent, number, and degree.

It is in this form of the complaint, that the patient is sometimes deeply jaundiced, also greatly emaciated: dropsical affections, now and then making their appearance, in the extremities as well as in the abdomen: It is here or most generally joined diarrhoea.

*Termination.*

Hepatitis like most inflammations, may terminate in resolution, suppuration, gangrene, or scirrhus, but its termination, in the latter way is of rare occurrence.

After suppuration takes place, the matter formed is either discharged by coughing, vomiting, purging, or by an abscess through an external opening.





opening, but it may also be discharged  
into the cavity of the abdomen, exciting  
peritoneal inflammation which for  
the most part quickly proves fatal.

### Causes.

Hepatitis may occur from  
sudden exposure, or application of  
cold, by intense summer heat, by the  
long continuation of bilious fever,  
and from irritation in the liver either  
directly, or through the medium of  
sympathy. Of the causes producing this  
disease directly, may be added con-  
stitions, blows, falls, and by mechanical  
irritation, such as inordinate pressure  
arising from the too tight lacing of  
stays.

The causes now and then producing  
inflammation of the liver, by sympathy



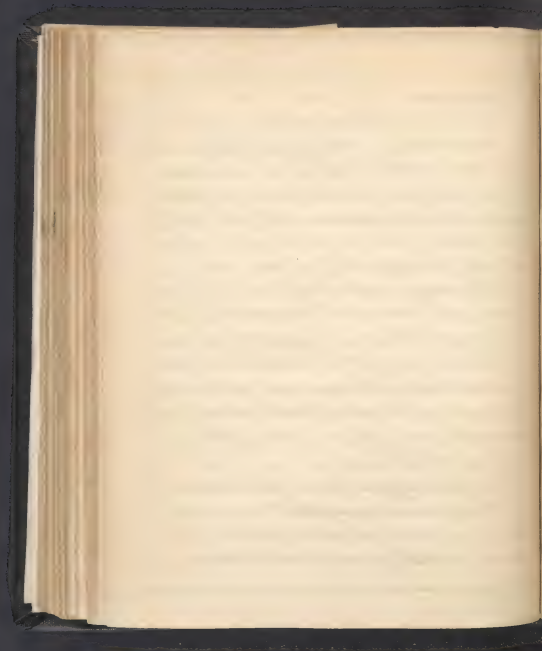
are numerous, they make their primary  
impression on the skin or stomach, those  
of the former kind are, humidity and  
sudden vicissitudes of the weather, from  
a high to a low temperature; of the  
causes which make their first impres-  
sion on the stomach are much more  
various, the habitual use of strong drink,  
indigestible substances taken into  
the stomach such as mineral poisons,  
when swallowed, if they do not destroy  
the person, frequently induce inflamma-  
tion of the liver.



## Diagnosis.

Inflammation of the liver is sometimes mistaking for peripneumonia and at other times for rheumatism. From peripneumonia it may be distinguished, by the pain in the side being less acute, that in the latter more steady, the difficulty of respiration less, the cough more dry, and the functions of the stomach considerably more deranged. There is frequently also, in inflammation of the abdominal viscera, a muddiness of the eye, and sallow appearance of the skin, which are not so manifest in inflammation of the viscera of the thorax.

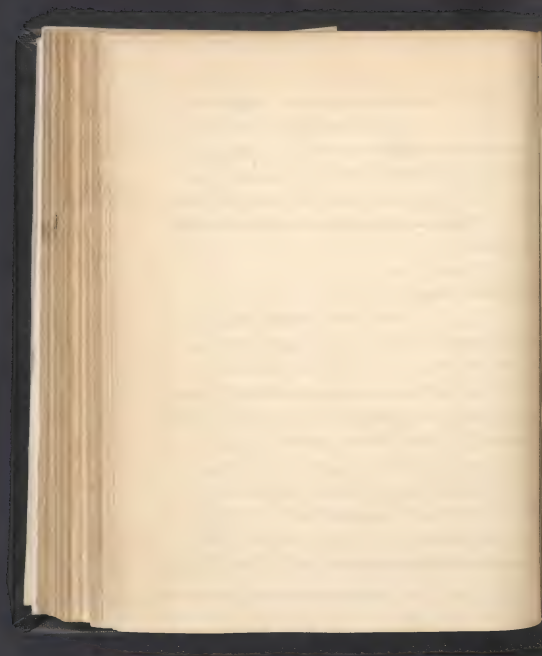
Hepatitis differs from rheumatism, in being more prevalent in warm than in cold climates, also in flat and marshy countries; whereas



The latter disease is more confined to cold climates, and mountainous countries. Rheumatism most generally attacks persons of a sanguineous temperament; hepatitis those of a bilious or melancholic temperament.

### Treatment.

In the acute form of this disease, where the symptoms run high, and the constitution will admit, we should strictly and vigorously employ the antiphlogistic plan of treatment; pushed to a considerable extent, by prompt and copious <sup>evacuation</sup> ~~evacuation~~ from a large orifice to the amount of sixteen or twenty ounces, twice and even thrice a day have been taken from the arm with





manifest advantage.

The quantity drawn however, must be regulated, as in other diseases by the symptoms and circumstances of the case. After general and copious bleeding, the early application of cups or leeches, over the region of the liver is of the highest importance, which for the most part should be repeated in ten or twelve hours, should the inflammatory action continue unabated.

After general and topical bloodletting, without alleviation of the vascular action, a large blister to the hypochondrial region, will be of the utmost utility. Cathartics should be early and freely administered, such as calomel quickened in its operation by jalap, is highly useful, in this disease, with those saline



purges may be occasionally attended,  
such as a strong infusion of senna  
holding glauber salt in solution,  
combined with perfect quietude, and  
a strict attention to the appropriate  
drinks, such as barley water, toast  
water, and lemonade, will be of the  
most essential interest to the welfare  
and security of the patient.

Should the disease prove tedious, the  
exhibition of calomel in small doses  
and the external application of mer-  
curial ointment, until the gums be  
gently affected.

Under such treatment, duly persisted  
in, with observing such variations  
as the circumstances may require, the  
disease rarely fails to be brought to a  
favorable termination.

Should suppuration take place, and

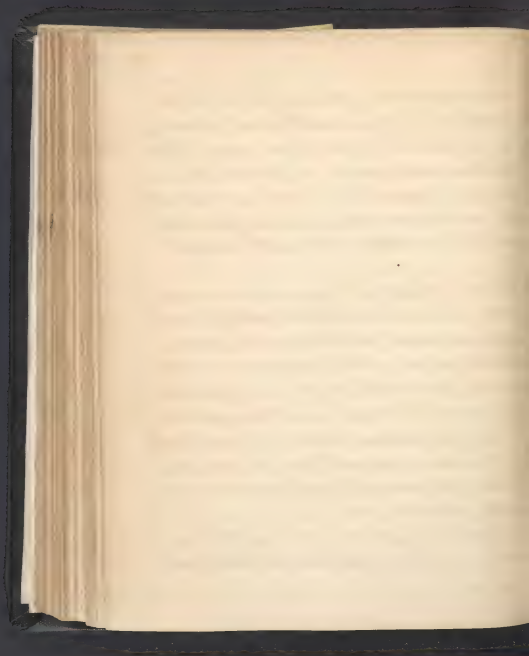


an abscess form externally, we must accelerate its formation as speedily as possible by poultices and fomentations, and when it points let an early incision be made and treated as we would similar affections seated in other parts of the body.

Chronic hepatitis being a more complicated disease than the acute, calls for more cautious and deliberate treatment.

In this stage of the disease venesection is to be used with more circumspection; the quantity drawn must be regulated by the symptoms and circumstances of the case, and only can be decided, by the judgement and discrimination of the practitioner.

In chronic inflammation of the liver, the use of mercury, becomes indispensible.



indispensable, pushed to the extent of gentle salivation; which for the most part should be continued from three to six weeks, if however, this should prove ineffectual, it may be again repeated at such intervals as the strength of the patient and constitution may require.

Should a fair trial of the mercurial treatment fail; we should next resort to nitric acid given in doses from two to three drachms, or even more in the course of twenty four hours, which will be of great service in those cases attended with irritability of the bowels, where the calomel runs off by stool.

The next thing of importance is to keep up the regular peristaltic motion of the intestines; by the exhibition of such cathartics as the case may demand.

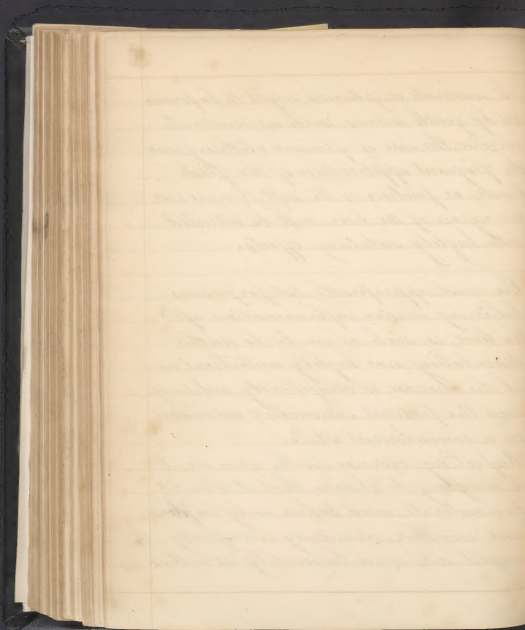




A moderate diaphoresis ought to be promoted by gentle means, such as moderate exercise, the use of flannel clothing, and the frequent application of the flesh brush, or friction with soft flannel over the region of the liver, will be attended with highly salutary effects.

The most appropriate diet for persons laboring under inflammation of the liver, is such as would be neither stimulating nor highly nutritious; until the disease is completely subdued, and the patient somewhat advanced in a convalescent state.

Respecting exercise in the open air, it is necessary to observe, that it should be moderate, and taken only in pleasant weather, avoiding carefully night air, and humidity, as well as



late hours, crowded assemblies, and every ✓  
thing calculated to induce fatigue.

To conclude my brief and imperfect ✓  
essay, I have only to express my warm-  
est thanks in return for the informa-  
-tion, I have acquired from an atten-  
-dance on your highly interesting lectures,  
and wishing health, happiness, and  
the highest degree of prosperity to the ✓  
professors of the medical school of the  
university of Pennsylvania.

Jonathan B. Willauer  
Pennsylvania

1824

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